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24 February 1977

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS EXPERIMENT:
SOVIET LOW ALTITUDE AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITIES

A. Main Conclusions of NIE 11-3/8-76

The Soviet air defense system has critical deficiencies in its ability to defend against air-to-surface missiles and bombers attacking at low altitudes. The USSR will probably not have significantly better defenses against low-altitude air attack before 1980. During the period beyond that time, it is estimated that, for defense against low-altitude bombers, the Soviets have the potential for overcoming many technical deficiencies by mid-1980s; possibly earlier with a very high level of effort. Thus, bomber penetration of Soviet defenses would be considerably more difficult in the mid-1980s than it would be today. The Soviets will not have an effective defense against the SRAM by the mid-1980s. There is uncertainty about the degree of protection that could be achieved against low-altitude cruise missiles in the mid-1980s, but it is estimated that it would be low. (The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believes that a new Soviet SAM system under development might provide some limited terminal defense against cruise missiles for approximately half the estimated target groupings in the USSR in the mid-1980s.) Finally, the air defense problems which the Soviets now face would be complicated even further by US deployment of advanced bombers and cruise missiles, but there are nevertheless important uncertainties about the future effectiveness of Soviet air defenses in an actual wartime environment.

B. Main Conclusions of the B Team

The B Team's estimate of the effectiveness of the Soviets' current low-altitude air defense is that it could vary from formidable to marginal. If operated in an optimum manner, existing Soviet air defenses may have the inherent capability to prevent most, if not all, US bombers from reaching their targets. "Marginal" capabilities can be inferred, however, from evidence of Soviet exercises and related sources, giving less weight to the inherent capabilities of Soviet equipment. The B Team concludes that neither of these judgments is inconsistent with the available evidence.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

TS 771506

25X1

C. Reasons for Difference

The NIE contains judgments regarding Soviet low-altitude defenses through 1986; the B Team limited its consideration to Soviet defenses at present and in the near future. The basic difference between the A and B Teams is in the weight each gave to the available evidence versus the gaps and uncertainties.

The A Team believes that the intelligence information which has been obtained from all sources is sufficient to be confident that existing Soviet defenses do in fact suffer from a number of identifiable and critical deficiencies in functions essential to an effective low-altitude defense. It also believes that present information, including information accumulated over many years about how the Soviets operate their air defense system, is sufficient to project Soviet capabilities with confidence over the next several years.

The B Team believes that current intelligence regarding Soviet air defenses is so dominated by unresolved uncertainties that a precise estimate of the defense capability cannot be made. It further holds that the Soviets may already have improved their defensive capabilities in ways not observable by the US, or could do so in the near future.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

TS 771506

D. Significance of the Differences

The implications of the B Team findings are that the bomber leg of the US triad of offensive forces could be sharply degraded, relatively quickly, in the near future if not at present. The A Team is confident that this is presently not the case. The B Team findings also imply the lack of any sound intelligence basis for decisions being made to improve US bombers and air-to-surface missiles. Despite uncertainties in its estimates of the future effectiveness of Soviet low-altitude air defenses, the A Team believes the data available, and projections from it, can contribute to the planning of future US bomber and missile forces.

E. Influence of the Experiment on the NIE

The B Team's analysis did not persuade the estimators to change the conclusion in the NIE that there are identifiable and critical deficiencies in Soviet low-altitude air defense capabilities which are sustained by the available evidence and will apply for at least the next several years. However, the competitive analysis experiment did influence the drafters of the NIE to address a wider range of possibilities, and to be more explicit in describing uncertainties about Soviet air defense capabilities in the period five to ten years hence than might otherwise have been the case.

TOP SECRET

Page Denied

Next 3 Page(s) In Document Denied 25X1

25X1

SECRET

24 February 1977

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS EXPERIMENT:
SOVIET STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

A. Main Conclusions of NIE 11-3/8-76

The main text of the Estimate, representing the DCI's position, acknowledges an ultimate Soviet goal of achieving a dominant position over the West, but maintains that other factors must also be considered in assessing the fundamental issue of the USSR's present objectives for its intercontinental forces. The Soviets view such forces as contributing to this ultimate goal but they also respect US capabilities and cannot be certain about future US behavior. Thus they probably do not count on achieving any specific predetermined relationship between their intercontinental capabilities and those of the US during the next decade, and do not count on a combination of actions by the USSR and lack of actions by the US which would permit the Russians, in the next ten years, to devastate the US while preventing the US from devastating the USSR. Soviet expectations, however, evidently reach well beyond a capability for intercontinental conflict that merely continues to be sufficient to deter an all-out attack. The Soviets are striving for war-fighting and war-survival capabilities that would leave the USSR in a better position than the US if a war occurred. They also seek forces with visible and therefore politically useful advantages over the US. They hope that their capabilities for intercontinental conflict will give them more latitude than they have had in the past for the vigorous pursuit of foreign policy objectives, and that these capabilities will discourage the US and others from using force or the threat of force to influence Soviet actions.

While all members of NFIB agree that the Soviets ultimately seek to achieve supremacy over the US and the West, their views of present Soviet policies and expectations differ, as indicated by the italicized text in the NIE and its Key Judgments. In this manner, the authors of the NIE have registered disagreements within the Intelligence Community about Soviet policies for their intercontinental forces during the period of the Estimate.

SECRET

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B. Main Conclusions of the B Team

The mandate of the B Team was to take an independent look at the data that go into the preparation of NIE 11-3/8, and on the basis determine whether a good case would be made that Soviet strategic objectives are, in fact, more ambitious and therefore implicitly more threatening to US security than they appear to the authors of the NIE.

In the B Team's view, the Soviet policy is based on an undeviating, operative grand strategy for achieving global hegemony for which military weapons, strategic ones included, represent only one element in a varied arsenal of means of persuasion and coercion. The B Team further regards Soviet thinking about war and politics as fundamentally Clausewitzian in character. Thus the Soviets have demonstrated unflagging persistence and patience in using available means to mold military, economic, political, social, and psychological forces so as to strengthen their own position and weaken that of any prospective challenger.

In support of this, the Soviets strive for effective superiority in all types of military capabilities. In strategic nuclear forces, they place a high priority on achieving a war-fighting and war-winning capability, in the sense of assuring substantial Soviet predominance following a nuclear war, and they may feel that this goal is within their grasp. If such a capability is not attainable, they intend to secure so substantial a nuclear war-fighting advantage that they would be less deterred than the US from initiating the use of nuclear weapons. Finally, the B Team believes that within the 10-year period of the NIE, the Soviets may well expect to achieve a degree of military superiority that would support a dramatically more aggressive pursuit of their objectives, including direct military challenges to vital Western interests.

C. Reasons for Differences

There appear to be important differences in the approaches of the two teams. That of the B Team reflects a belief in the preeminent influence of ideology and doctrine on Soviet behavior and a reading of Russian history and national character which sees the Soviets as self-assured, offensive-minded, and expansionist. The B Team has thus viewed all Soviet actions

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in the strategic field as presumably part of a cohesive, rational effort to achieve the ultimate goals of Soviet hegemony in the world, and has stressed Soviet official pronouncements and other indications of continued commitment to these goals.

The approach of the CIA analysts and some others on the A Team, in contrast, has reflected an intelligence judgment that Soviet behavior has in varying degrees been influenced by a number of practical concerns and considerations as well as by ideology and doctrine. In evaluating the probable motivations and intentions behind particular Soviet courses of action, they have therefore not only considered how these courses of action might advance traditional Soviet goals and ambitions but have also scrutinized the evidence to determine what other factors may have been at work. These analysts also believe that the B Team's view of Russian history and character fails to take sufficient account of the impact of personal and historical Russian experience with adversity, especially the experience of invasion in World War II, on the outlook of the Soviet leadership. Thus their estimate puts relatively greater weight on continuing Soviet concerns for security than does that of the B Team, especially in evaluating Soviet expectations over the next 10 years.

The approach and conclusions of DIA analysts and the Services are closer to that of the B Team.

D. Influence of the Experiment on the NIE

Many of the B Team's basic conclusions about long-term Soviet aspirations to global dominance are not incompatible with the NIE. Nevertheless, the main text of the Estimate reflects the view that the B Team's picture of the Soviets as "all-aggressive" and "all-offensive" in their force posture, guided by a clearly defined "grand strategy" for the attainment of superiority, is unrealistic. The position of the DCI in the NIE places more stress than the B Team on the very real problems which the Soviets confront, the uncertainties that they face, their high respect for US capabilities, and their concerns about current US programs. Thus the DCI position in the NIE is that there is a wider gap than the B Team believes between current Soviet expectations and the objectives we all agree the Soviets ultimately seek.

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SECRET

The DCI's estimate of Soviet objectives and expectations in this year's NIE is not substantially different from that of his predecessor in last year's NIE. It is true, however, that over the past several years the successive NIEs have presented an increasingly stark picture of Soviet capabilities and objectives as our evidence and analysis of the scope, vigor, and persistence of Soviet strategic offensive and defensive programs has accumulated. This took place in previous years without any B Team challenge and in face would have taken place this year had there been none.

The B Team's assessment of Soviet strategic objectives was more assertive than analytical, and hence the report itself made little contribution to the development of intelligence methodology. Nevertheless, the process had several identifiable influences on the NIE. The discipline of having to confront alternative views caused the analytic groups preparing the Estimate to seek particularly carefully to document their conclusions, to be precise in their terminology--especially about Soviet doctrine--and to avoid generalizations about the future which were not firmly grounded in defensible intelligence analysis.

SECRET

SECRET

24 February 1977

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS EXPERIMENT:
CRITIQUE OF INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES
AND METHODOLOGY BY B TEAM
ON SOVIET OBJECTIVES

1. The B Team on Soviet objectives devotes most of its report to a criticism of US strategic estimates and their drafters, past and present. It charges that the estimates, over the years, have tended consistently to underestimate the intensity, scope and implicit threat of Soviet strategic programs, not only in their assessment of Soviet strategic objectives, but also in their treatment of individual weapon systems and force components. It asserts that estimates in the 11-3/8 series have been too narrow in their approach to Soviet national strategy, have concentrated too much on technical matters, and have misinterpreted or neglected the basic elements of Soviet strategic thinking. As a result, the estimators have fallen into a persistent habit of "mirror-imaging," attributing to Soviet decisionmakers essentially US ways of thinking and acting about strategic matters. It charges that the estimates have also been influenced by policy pressures and considerations and by institutional bias, on the part of the civilians "who control the NIE language," against the views of the military intelligence agencies.

2. As to the criticism that estimates in the 11-3/8 series focus too narrowly on forces for intercontinental conflict and that they concentrate too much on technical evidence and hardware, the basic answer is that the physical threat to the US and its Triad is not an improper subject for a NIE. The Intelligence Community may or may not have an accurate appreciation of Soviet "grand strategy," but we do not believe it necessary or desirable to bind all of our conclusions about the Soviet view of the total "correlation of forces" into this particular estimate. NIE 11-4-76 does this.

3. As to the criticism of past underestimates, which it says is caused by attributing US thinking to the Soviets, the B Team has some legitimate grounds for this criticism, at least insofar as earlier estimates are concerned. The estimates of the 1960s failed to foresee the magnitude and sustained character of the Soviet strategic buildup and tended to depict the Soviets as more concerned about stirring up the

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US, more anxious to shift resources to the civilian sector, more willing to settle for assured destruction, and more undecided about the desirability of continuing the buildup than proved to be the case. Those of the 1968-1972 period judged that the Soviets were more interested in stabilizing the strategic relationship on the basis of rough equality than now appears to be the case. The 1972 estimate was wrong in depicting the desire to avoid jeopardizing detente as probably representing a significant constraint on Soviet behavior.

4. These errors were serious, and must be guarded against in the future. With these notable exceptions, however, the B Team's views appear to be largely based on misreading of the estimative history, especially the history of the past several years:

--The B Team's presentation of "implicit NIE assumptions and judgments" and its summary of the estimative history are marked by selective quotations and serious misinterpretations of what the estimates actually said.

--As one of a number of examples, the B Team says that the "major reasons" given in NIE 11-8-73 for the breadth of Soviet strategic programs were a desire to accommodate internal drives and reservations about arms control and concerns about falling behind the US. In fact, the estimate concluded that while present Soviet activity "doubtless reflects in part" such drives and concerns, it "involves more than can be readily explained as merely trying to keep up with the competition." The estimate went on to assert that the Soviets almost certainly hope to improve their relative position vis-a-vis the US and that their objectives probably included "an opportunistic desire to press ahead and achieve a margin of superiority if they can."

--In its blanket condemnation of the strategic estimates, old and new, the B Team has virtually ignored the steadily increasing concern about the future implications of the scope, vigor, and persistence of Soviet strategic programs which the estimates have reflected over the past several years.

SECRET

SECRET

--The B Team also ignores or dismisses the research the Intelligence Community has devoted to the key issues of air and missile defense, antisubmarine warfare, and advanced research and development generally, as well as to Soviet military concepts about nuclear war and to the arrangements and preparations within the Soviet military establishment for actually waging such a war should it occur.

5. Thus the B Team's principal quarrel with the estimates of the past several years, and especially the current one, would appear to be that they have not adopted, without qualification, the B Team's contention that Soviet actions in the strategic weapons field are almost exclusively attributable to a longstanding, single-minded effort to achieve a war-winning degree of strategic nuclear superiority. Differences exist between the Intelligence Community's conclusions and those of the B Team--and indeed among different elements of the Community--not because of any recent failure to study the "soft" data on basic Soviet strategic concepts and goals, as the B Team asserts, but rather because the Intelligence Community has also sought to take into account a broad range of additional classified and unclassified information on contemporary Soviet strategic thinking and decisionmaking. As a result, it has reached somewhat different conclusions about the motivations and circumstances shaping Soviet strategic programs, and especially about what the Soviets think they can realistically hope to accomplish during the next ten years.

6. Similarly, we believe the unwillingness of the Intelligence Community to adopt the "worst case" obiter dicta of the B Team on such questions as the performance and role of the Backfire, the likelihood that mobile IRBMs will be converted to ICBMs, and the extent of Soviet progress in such fields as ASW and ABM is not properly attributed to faulty methods and institutional bias, as the B Team alleges. It results from differing professional judgments as to what the technical and other evidence demonstrates about the present and potential capabilities of Soviet weapon systems and about how the Soviets themselves probably think they can most effectively employ them. Indeed, it is the B Team which appears to apply the questionable logic that pessimistic conclusions about overall Soviet political and policy goals legitimize and even necessitate uniformly

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pessimistic technical conclusions on what the Soviets are seeking and actually achieving with respect to particular weapon systems and forces.*

7. We can find no basis for the charge that the estimates have been influenced by policy pressures and considerations--a charge which not only impugns the motives of the intelligence professionals concerned but also ignores a strong tradition among them against policy influence. The few specific references the B Team has made to possible instances of policy bias are unsubstantiated.

8. We believe that the B Team's charge of institutional bias in the estimates should be rejected on several counts:

- It grossly exaggerates the extent of bureaucratic rivalry between CIA analysts and their opposite numbers in other agencies, and the degree to which CIA's known professional skepticism represents bias against the view of any particular department.
- It ignores the fact that civilian control of the NIE language, which has always been diluted by the give and take of the coordination process, has been further modified in the current practice of using agencies other than CIA to provide drafts or task team chairmen for portions of the estimate.
- It ignores the fact that the right of dissent by any intelligence agency to any part of any estimate has always been a part of the NIE process, and that the final NIE comprises the findings of all participants, including those who register dissents.
- Thus it ignores the key role played by differing institutional viewpoints, and the checks and balances they provide, in assuring that the strategic estimates are the result of an informed debate in which differing analyses and interpretations of the evidence are fully aired.

* For our comments on these more technical aspects of the NIEs as portrayed by the B Team in Part Two of its report, see Annex.

SECRET

TS 771506

24 February 1977

ANNEXCOMMENTS ON THE B TEAM'S
"CRITIQUE OF NIE INTERPRETATIONS OF CERTAIN
SOVIET STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS"

In Part Two of its report, the B Team on Soviet objectives discusses ten specific aspects of Soviet strategic force development which it believes the estimate to have underestimated or neglected. We briefly comment on each of these topics below.

Central Strategic Attack Systems

The B Team, like all critics for years, notes past underestimates of Soviet missile forces. These were indeed serious. Partly because of these misestimates, the 11-3/8 series has for some years presented a range of alternative future Soviet force levels and capabilities as a more effective way to assist US planners. The B Team fails to recognize this methodology and its importance.

Economic Constraints

In charging that admittedly low past estimates of the ruble costs of Soviet defense spending had a "serious warping effect" on the estimates, the B Team disregards the way in which they are generated and used. The NIE cost estimates are based on observations and estimates of forces and equipment physically present, and the magnitude of the Soviet effort is measured primarily in dollars--i.e., by how much it would cost to procure and maintain such forces in the US. Estimated ruble equivalents of these dollar costs are used only to depict the relative burden of military programs as compared with other Soviet expenditures.

The B Team's charges that the estimates overestimated the economic pressures to cut military spending (while underestimating, as noted above, the actual ruble burden of Soviet military programs) are true of the earlier estimates but no longer valid. Since Soviet resources are not unlimited we continue to believe that economic considerations place some outer limits on what is spent for military purposes or particular programs. In recent years, however, the estimates have stressed the high priority accorded military spending.

TOP SECRET

TS 771506

The B Team also states that the evolution of NIE judgments on Soviet ABM program costs suggests "either an analytical blind spot or a policy influenced bias or both." What appears to concern the B Team is that the NIEs up through 1967 stressed the very heavy economic burden of an expanded ABM system while those from 1968 on did not, evidently suggesting to the B Team an effort to play up the likelihood that the Soviets would actually deploy additional ABMs. In fact, the change resulted from an analytical study, first reflected in the 1968 estimate, which indicated that if Soviet allocations of funds to ABM deployment were at all compatible with what the Soviets allotted to previous high priority weapon deployment programs, both the numbers deployed and the economic burden would be much lower than previously projected.

Civil Defense

We acknowledge that the Intelligence Community was slow to note and appreciate the growing scope of Soviet civil defense activities in the early 1970s and that the Community's disbelief in the effectiveness of the program as previously carried on--a view reaffirmed after a review of evidence in 1970--was probably affected by some "mirror-imaging." The B Team fails to indicate, however, that the Intelligence Community now fully recognizes the potential importance of the program, that an extensive interagency review of Soviet civil defense was undertaken last year in preparation for NIE 11-3/8-76, and that a greatly expanded collection and analysis effort is under way. We still believe that the B Team goes beyond what the evidence will support in its estimates of civil defense effectiveness and in its belief that the increased scope of civil defense was specifically linked with the decision in favor of ABM limits.

Military Hardening

We agree that the estimates have slighted Soviet programs to harden military command and control installations. We believe, however, that they should be considered in connection not only with civil defense preparations (some examples of which the B Team cites under the rubric of military hardening) but also with parallel programs to harden ICBM silos and launch facilities and other military facilities. We believe that these efforts to increase military survivability, like

TOP SECRET

TS 771506

those undertaken by the US, contribute to deterrence as well as war-fighting ability. They are at least as valuable for assuring survivable retaliatory forces as for use in a first strike.

Mobile Missiles

We share the B Team's concerns that the SS-X-20 IRBM may be capable of fairly rapid conversion into the SS-X-16 ICBM. The SS-X-20 conversion possibility and the consequent "quick breakout" potential, as well as the difficulty of distinguishing mobile IRBMs from mobile ICBMs when deployed, are treated at some length in NIE 11-3/8-76. (The B Team's expectations of a high production run for the SS-X-16 are based on earlier Soviet plans which have not been fulfilled.)

Backfire

The B Team's complaints of one-sidedness in estimative treatment of the Backfire would appear to be applicable to its own extended recital of the arguments for considering the Backfire as an intercontinental bomber. No NIE has denied or obscured the fact that Backfire can reach the US. However, the Intelligence Community has also been obliged to present to policymakers, as evenhandedly as possible, the evidence and best judgments of its members on the specific capabilities and limitations of the aircraft in the intercontinental role, on its suitability for the peripheral role, and on any indications of how the Soviets actually plan to employ it. It is on the basis of these considerations that CIA and some other agencies have judged that Backfire was more suitable for, and more likely to be used in the peripheral role. Others in the Intelligence Community have different views and these views are given equal treatment in the NIE.

Antisatellite Testing

The B Team's presentation is generally consistent with ours as far as it goes. However, it discusses the problem almost exclusively in terms of non-nuclear orbital interception, ignoring other means of interference with US space systems such as electronic warfare, which a recent inter-agency study considered the most likely form of interference in situations short of major war. We also believe that the B Team's advice that we should lay greater stress on recognized Soviet technological capabilities than on identified

TS 771506

ASAT systems takes insufficient account of the Soviet propensity to retain existing weapon systems even after new ones are introduced. Both existing capabilities and future possibilities are stressed in the NIEs and interagency intelligence memoranda.

Strategic ASW

The logic chain the B Team uses to question the estimate of Soviet capabilities to counter the US SSBN force is no substitute for the thorough study of relevant technical issues on which the Intelligence Community based its judgments. We reject: (a) the B Team's unfounded charges that those responsible for the estimate were unaware of some of the key literature on the subject and had only "limited capacity" to "understand, analyze and assess" it; and (b) the insinuation that our conclusions "could well raise doubts" as to whether they were not deliberately slanted to "protect" the US SSBN program or to bolster the argument that the Soviets could never achieve militarily meaningful superiority. The B Team apparently misconstrued the NIE judgment that Soviet capabilities against the US SSBN force would remain limited as meaning that the estimate did not foresee any improvements at all in Soviet ASW systems and capabilities over the next ten years.

ABM, Directed Energy and Strategic Defense

The B Team's point about the desirability of looking at strategic defense as a whole rather than broken down into separate categories is well taken. Otherwise, we find this section unpersuasive. The B Team's discussion of the estimative treatment of ABM ignores the fact that the estimates of ABM capabilities are based on detailed technical analyses rather than "implicit net assessments." Its argument for a SAM upgrade potential implies, misleadingly, that existing systems could be used as ABMs without further modification or testing. We do not know, for example, that the SA-2 and the SA-5 have been tested in ABM modes, although the Air Force has registered in the NIE its belief that the SA-5 may have been modified for ABM use without our detection.

As with its discussion of ASW capabilities, the B Team's sweeping conclusion that Soviet laser and CPB efforts in ABM are of a "magnitude that is difficult to overestimate" is not

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

TS 771506

a substitute for technical analysis. While we acknowledge that there are differing intelligence views on whether Soviet directed-energy research is more ambitious and advanced than that of the US, debate on that subject within the Intelligence Community is based on intense professional study.

Non-Central Nuclear Systems

We agree that the recent practice of treating intercontinental and peripheral attack forces in separate estimates tends to obscure the fact that the Soviets regard both elements as strategic and lump them together organizationally and in their planning. While there is a continuing policy requirement for having Soviet forces presented in packages which correspond to those used in US force planning, more estimative attention should probably be given to those Soviet strategic force elements now classified as peripheral, and to their role in overall Soviet strategic planning. An interagency intelligence memorandum discussing Soviet strategic peripheral attack forces in some detail is in preparation.

TOP SECRET